

Smith, Tasha

From: cynthia lynes <lynescynthia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 1:46 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Proposed House Bill 7285 relating to alleged misconduct by law enforcement personnel

March 23, 2017

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary and Members of the Connecticut Legislative Governing Body:

My name is Cynthia Lynes. I was born and raised in New Haven, CT, and am currently living in Hamden, CT. I am writing to you now in reference to Proposed House Bill 7285, specifically, the parts concerning the acceptance, processing and investigation of complaints relating to police misconduct.

Before I speak to that, let me say that I was raised to believe that the police were there to defend and protect all the people, all the time. If I were lost, find a policeman. If I were in trouble, find a policeman. My family's belief in the honor, courage and reliability of the police was absolute.

After all, this is America. Right?

Well, over the years and into adulthood, my absolute faith has begun to shred. I've observed and heard reports of increasing police arrogance and brutality from Chicago and New York City to New Haven, CT, and Waterbury, CT. While I believe in the necessity of a police force in a civil society, I also believe that they must serve and respect their communities, and maintain transparency and accountability in their actions.

As of now, the methods by which citizens can report abuse--the citizen complaint process--is broken. Badly broken.

You are aware of this, that's why the proposed House Bill 7285 exists.

Police agencies' compliance remains largely nonexistent. Hurdles are put up everywhere and in every way.

So--I urge you to add three amendments to House Bill 7285 that would address these problems:

- 1) Add stiff penalties to police agencies that do not comply with complaint-acceptance and investigative laws. For example--no compliance with state law, no state funding.
- 2) Standardization of complaint forms with non-threatening and simple, clear language to avoid confusion; translation of forms into diverse languages commonly spoken in Connecticut; availability of forms online, and the absolute guarantee of anonymity.
- 3) Ensure that police agencies track and report all complaint data yearly to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

I truly believe that a transparent and accessible police-complaint process will help rebuild the rapidly disappearing trust our citizens have in our police.

In conclusion, I must add a sense of urgency. This Proposed House Bill 7285 and these amendments must happen now. Not 6 months from now. Not a year from now.

Time is something we can no longer afford to squander.

Thank you.

Yours respectfully,

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